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- Today's Insider (PDF)



YOU DON'T SAY...

"They voted for Hillary Clinton, there's no way they're voting for Jerry Tillman. But I've still got Randolph."

Sen. Jerry Tillman, R-Randolph, on the portions of Guilford County in his redrawn Senate district.

THE INSIDER, 10/12/17

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News Summary

Lottery Advertising

Resources: [Draft Lottery Bill](#)

Minutes after the bill was released to committee members and the public, a legislative oversight committee voted Thursday in favor of raising the amount the N.C. Education Lottery can spend to advertise its games.

Current law caps advertising spending at 1 percent of the lottery's annual revenue, a restriction favored by lottery critics who worry that heavy advertising could contribute to gambling addictions. The bill passed by the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on the North Carolina State Lottery on Thursday would raise that cap to 2 percent of annual revenue; the lottery would still face a cap on total administrative expenses of 8 percent of revenue.

Sen. Jerry Tillman, R-Randolph and chairman of the oversight committee, introduced the bill at the end of Thursday's meeting. "Rep. (John) Bell, you want to second that motion?" to approve the bill, Tillman asked. "I'm reading the bill right now," Bell replied. Sen. Floyd McKissick, D-Durham, said he supports the proposal but criticized the process Tillman used to hold a vote. "As a matter of process, it would be good in the future if we could receive these types of bills before the meeting," McKissick said.

Tillman defended his approach, noting that the bill is a single page with one simple provision. "There's nothing hidden in that bill whatsoever," he said, arguing that the change will help the lottery grow. "That's an easy way to get lottery revenues boosted and get more money for the schools. I think this is something that we will have bipartisan support on." Rep. Pat Hurley, R-Randolph, was the only committee member who spoke against the bill. She questioned why the lottery couldn't shift some of its \$5 million marketing budget to advertising instead of raising the cap.

Rev. Mark Creech of the conservative Christian Action League, which opposes the lottery, said he's concerned by the committee's action. "It's disappointing to see misplaced faith in the lottery by a decision to double its advertising," Creech said in an email. "The lottery, state sponsored gambling, is a major policy failure. It's highly regressive and is an unsustainable revenue source. ... The Oversight Committee would have done much better to have discussed at length what could be done to provide improved disclosure about what people are actually buying when they purchase a ticket. What's needed is greater transparency -- not more money thrown at a colossal government failure."

No further action on the bill is expected until next year's session, when it will be formally filed and go through another round of committee hearings. If the bill passes, lottery officials estimate it would increase sales by \$308 million and result in an additional \$63.4 million in education funding. The oversight committee also heard an update from lottery director Alice Garland, who said the agency is preparing to launch the new game Carolina Keno later this month. The Keno game will include drawings every five minutes, and players can decide how much money to spend each time they play, with bigger prizes for larger purchases. "I'm hoping we'll get a few millennials with this game," she said. Keno is projected to generate \$135.4 million annually in additional revenue by fiscal year 2018-2019; that would mean \$30.9 million more going to schools.

Garland also discussed the possibility of adding what are known as "digital instant" games to the lottery's online offerings, where players would buy tickets online and could immediately find out if they've won a prize. She said that could increase revenue by \$130 million over the first five years. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/13/17).

Opioid Update

Currently three people die every day in North Carolina because of an opioid overdose, and Susan Kansagra with the state Department of Health and Human Services said that could soon jump to four a day. Her remarks came during the Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee meeting Thursday. Kansagra was tasked with updating the body about the growing epidemic.

She showed the lawmakers a map of North Carolina comparing the opioid prescription rate and the overdose mortality rate, which shows a correlation. "Where there were greater prescriptions for opioids, we also saw a greater number of overdose deaths," Kansagra said.

In 2014, Kansagra noted that for every opioid overdose death in North Carolina, there were about three people hospitalized related to an opioid overdose. In that same year, 7,717,711 prescriptions for opioids were dispensed and 349,000 residents reported misusing prescription pain relievers. "Now what we're seeing over the last several years is a transition to heroin and fentanyl," she said. "Because heroin is available so cheaply on our streets, people have now moved from prescription opioids to gradually shifting to heroin and fentanyl use." Heroin or other

synthetic narcotics -- like fentanyl -- were involved in about 60 percent of unintentional opioid deaths in 2016, according to Kansagra's presentation.

There's already work being done to address the crisis on several levels. The state is creating an infrastructure to think about how to manage the epidemic. Most of that work is being done through the Opioid and Prescription Drug Abuse Advisory Committee. Other strategies include reducing the oversupply of prescription opioids, reducing diversion of prescription drugs and the flow of illicit drugs, increasing community awareness and prevention, making naloxone widely available, linking overdose survivors to care, and expanding access to treatment and recovery-oriented systems of care.

Sen. John Alexander, R-Wake, expressed concern that residents aren't being told the names of specific opioids that are most commonly available. "I think you raise an excellent point, and I think that's something we need to increasingly do. Because you're right, using the word opioids is a broad term and making sure that people are aware that we're talking about Percocet, Vicodin, Oxycodone, Oxycontin, using all those names," Kansagra said. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 10/13/17).

Electoral Maps

Just because legislators repeated over and over that race was not a consideration in drawing new electoral maps last month does not make it so, challengers told federal judges on Thursday. Edwin Speas, a Raleigh attorney representing voters who contend the new districts continue to illegally pack black voters into districts in Cumberland and Guilford counties, weakening their overall influence, pointed out that lawmakers used the same mapmaker in the original maps in 2011 and the new ones in 2017.

Three federal judges -- who ruled last year that 28 state House and Senate districts drawn in 2011 were unconstitutional racial gerrymanders -- heard arguments in a federal courtroom in Greensboro on Thursday about whether maps adopted by the Republican-led General Assembly in September remedied the unconstitutional districts.

Republicans who led the redistricting process said before the maps were approved that while race was considered in the drawing of districts in 2011, no racial data would be considered in their response to the court order. The judges broke for lunch before Phil Strach, the Raleigh attorney representing the Republican legislators, finished his arguments.

Federal judges recently ruled that Republicans unconstitutionally gerrymandered two North Carolina congressional districts by race. But redrawing districts to benefit the political party in power is nothing new and has been going on for years. But many questions arose about the legislators' decision to use Thomas Hofeller, the veteran mapmaker for the Republican Party, to fix the maps.

Judge James Wynn asked Strach about similarities between Hofeller's old maps and the new ones, and whether the mapmaker could simply clear from his head the previous considerations of race that landed the lawmakers in court. Judge Thomas Schroeder said he struggled with the notion that challengers said lawmakers had to consider race in the drawing of new maps while they were in trouble for relying too heavily on race in drawing them the first time. The judges talked a lot about the difficulties they found themselves in by not wanting to get into policy-making and take on the legislative role of drawing district lines to reflect population shifts. They have not ruled out the possibility of appointing someone who both parties and they could agree on to draw maps that fix the problems.

In a written order late Thursday, the panel asked lawyers to offer by next week names of at least three possible third-party experts, known as special masters, to avoid delays should the panel favor the voters. (Anne Blythe, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, and THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/12/17).

Override Session

Legislators might be returning to Raleigh next week to override Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of an election bill. Becki Gray of the conservative John Locke Foundation tweeted that she heard at a lobbyist event that the General Assembly would "be back next Tuesday." Legislative leaders had previously said veto overrides would be addressed in the January session, but Senate leader Phil Berger's office confirmed late Thursday that a session next week is possible, but no final decision has been made. If the session is held by Tuesday, no formal call for a special session is necessary.

because the current adjournment resolution called for no-vote sessions through Tuesday. Cooper vetoed Senate Bill 656 because of a provision eliminating 2018 judicial primaries, something legislators said is needed to allow time for judicial redistricting and other possible changes. The bill also makes it easier for unaffiliated candidates and third parties to get on the ballot. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/13/17).

Science Panel

Three months after state leaders announced they were forming an expert science panel to advise regulators and public health officials on everything from coal ash contaminants to GenX, agencies are still working to appoint members of the group. Gov. Roy Cooper has repeatedly pointed to the formation of the Science Advisory Board as a tool the state will use to help protect people from new and unregulated chemicals using the best available scientific evidence. Their recommendations may upend the state's requirements for the water filters Duke Energy must supply to homeowners living near its coal ash pits. They could also impact how the state Department of Environmental Quality will regulate largely unstudied compounds, such as GenX. An announcement Thursday afternoon from DEQ and the Department of Health and Human Services named a chair for the nascent Science Advisory Panel and a first meeting date in two weeks. Jamie Bartram, a professor at the School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will helm the group appointed by the secretaries of both agencies. But a DEQ spokesman said the remaining members will be announced "as soon as possible" once they're confirmed.

"Nearly 50 names were put forward to serve on the board from across the state, and we've narrowed that down and plan to announce the members in the next few days," spokesman Jamie Kritzer said in an email. "This panel will provide critical guidance on long-term issues, so it's important that we take our time and get top experts in the state to serve."

State officials initially said in July those members would be appointed at the end of the month. The delay means well owners living near several of Duke's coal ash ponds, many of whom have been using bottled water for drinking and cooking for almost two-and-a-half years, are still waiting for final information about their permanent drinking water options. By state law, Duke must provide residents near the ash ponds with alternative sources of water -- either new water lines or filtration systems -- by October 2018. With the Science Advisory Board not scheduled to meet until Oct. 23, residents may be running out of time.

"They haven't even assembled yet," Cathy Cralle Jones, an attorney representing homeowners near several of Duke's plants, said. "How are they even going to begin to grapple with good advice in the length of time needed to solve these problems?"

DEQ Secretary Michael Regan said at the time that the panel would "provide the state with much-needed scientific expertise to confront these issues."

The panel's expertise, incidentally, would come from outside the influence of an executive branch that has in recent months clashed with lawmakers over accusations of slashed funding for state agencies and inadequate responses to emerging environmental problems. Even before the new board was announced publicly, DEQ officials told Duke about their intention to form the group in mid-June. Yet, neither agency has elaborated fully on why it's taken them four months to seat members of the Science Advisory Board. DHHS forwarded questions about the appointment process to Kritzer, who said staff at both departments have been "actively seeking qualified people to take on this important role," a process that has included extensive vetting.

"Anytime you have a panel that you're expanding like this one and you're looking for the very best, you want to get the very best," Kritzer said Wednesday.

But in the meantime, Jones said her clients have repeatedly asked for meetings with the environmental and health agencies to work toward a faster solution for permanent clean drinking water. While she thinks the advisory board's role in an important one, she said getting its recommendation on issues like hexavalent chromium may be overkill for homeowners who are pushing for access to public water supplies as soon as possible.

"If we wait for the dust to settle on this, Duke's not going to get what it needs, our clients aren't going to get what they need, and everything just stays in flux," Jones said. "I am frustrated beyond words that this is taking so long." (Tyler Dukes, WRAL NEWS, 10/12/17).

Palin Criticism

Former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin criticized Gov. Roy Cooper this week over reports that Hurricane Matthew victims had been turned away from an event featuring the governor in Columbus County.

Palin shared an article from sarahpalinnews.com that cited a WBTV story about flood victims in Fair Bluff who were unable to attend the governor's visit to a school there. "Mainstream media won't touch this one," she posted on her Facebook and Twitter pages, with a link to a post labeled "Democrat Gov Does Something HORRIBLE When Confronted By Hurricane Victims." Other conservative websites posted similar headlines based on the WBTV report.

Cooper wasn't "confronted" by hurricane victims. Several flood victims who sought to attend the event were turned away by a school resource officer who had been given a list of invited guests, according to the governor's office. The governor was unaware of the situation, and he said so when the WBTV reporter asked him about it during the event.

"Before the governor's arrival, a school resource officer told several people whose names were not listed that they would not be able to join," Cooper spokesman Ford Porter said in an email to the Insider. "This was a miscommunication and our office requested their contact information from WBTV in order to pass it along to the disaster response office -- unfortunately those details were left out of the initial news report. While we've made progress on recovery, many communities and families are still reeling from the storm. Since taking office Governor Cooper has visited communities that were devastated by Hurricane Matthew on many occasions to make sure the state's response is thorough and efficient."

Last weekend, Cooper and First Lady Kristin Cooper joined a volunteer event in Lumberton working on storm-damaged homes, and earlier this month, he visited the home of a flood victim in Princeville. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/13/17).

Charter Backers

The N.C. Association of Educators for years was a major voice in state policy discussions, making weighty endorsements and campaign contributions. The teacher's organization has been the most consistent opponent of privatized education and charter schools. As the NCAE's influence dimmed when Republicans won control of the legislature after the 2010 elections, the power of charter-school supporters grew. Lobbying intensified and campaign contributions flowed.

Charter school advocates since 2011 have made more than \$1.7 million in political contributions in the state. Most of that money came from three people. North Carolina businessman Robert Luddy accounts for about half of that total. Luddy started a charter school and contributes widely to Republican candidates and committees. John Bryan of Oregon gave about \$600,000 to dozens of Republican candidates and GOP-run political committees.

Another major donor was former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg -- but he didn't always contribute to advocates of charter-school expansion. He gave \$250,000 to the state Democratic Party, whose platform raises concerns about the use of charter schools to segregate students, and \$5,100 to Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper, who has expressed similar concerns. Bloomberg also contributed \$5,100 to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson, a Republican school-choice advocate.

Some charter school supporters have made targeted donations. J.C. Huizenga of Michigan, founder of for-profit charter management company National Heritage Academies, contributed \$2,000 to state Senate leader Phil Berger; \$2,500 to state Sen. Jerry Tillman, who has pushed for more charter schools and charter-friendly laws; and \$1,000 to Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, a Republican school-choice proponent with key roles in choosing state charter school leaders.

Johnson received campaign contributions from charter advocates around the country, including Jon Sackler, an investment executive from Connecticut, and Bloomberg. Johnson received at least \$22,300 from charter school supporters, including \$2,000 from Baker Mitchell, who runs a for-profit charter management company with four schools in the state; \$500 from Paul Norcross, who runs a for-profit company that manages one school, and \$1,000 from Gregg Sinders, who worked at the state legislature and is now the state director for a nonprofit charter school network called TeamCFA, founded by Bryan. Sinders is on the board of directors of a charter school in Holly Springs. Johnson said campaign contributors have not influenced his thinking. (Lynn Bonner, Jane Stancill and David Raynor, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Online Charters

Online charter schools came to North Carolina under a cloud that still lingers two years after they began enrolling students. K12, Inc. and Connections Academy were approved in 2015 as critics of online education pounded on reports of poor student performance in other states. The Tennessee education commissioner had tried to boot K12, Inc. out of his state. In 2014, a virtual school in Pennsylvania decided not to renew its management contract with the company. In North Carolina, the State Board of Education approved the schools reluctantly, and only after the state legislature passed a law requiring the state to allow four-year pilot programs for two companies.

But both of North Carolina's online charters received Ds from the state in their first year and again in their second year. Earning those low grades and falling short of expectations for student growth landed both schools the status of "low-performing schools." Each school enrolled more than 1,700 students last year. Under the law, enrollment at each school can increase 20 percent each year. Grades are based mainly on standardized test scores. A D means the school earned between 40 and 54 points on a 100-point scale.

All online charter students must have an adult at home who guides their progress and stays in contact with teachers. (Lynn Bonner and David Raynor, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Weekend TV

Political roundtable shows in North Carolina will cover how African-American teachers positively impact education for African-American students, the state's opioid crisis, school construction funding and the state's attempts to lure Amazon's second headquarters. Here's what to look for:

- **Education Matters:** This week, guests examine whether having at least one black teacher make it less likely a black student will drop out of high school and be more likely to go to college. They'll also discuss discipline disparities for black students. **Host:** Keith Poston **Guests:** Dr. Constance Lindsay, research associate with the Urban Institute, and Atrayus O. Goode, president and CEO of Movement of Youth **Airs:** Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. on WRAL, Sunday at 8:00 a.m. on Fox50, Sunday at 6:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. on UNC-TV's North Carolina Channel and anytime on NCFORUM.ORG.
- **Front Row:** This week's show tackles North Carolina's opioid crisis, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline hitting a snag, the White House sending its immigration package to Congress, and an EPA administrator declaring the war on coal is over. **Host:** Marc Rotterman **Guests:** Mitch Kokai of the John Locke Foundation; Democratic strategist Morgan Jackson; Rep. Ed Hanes, D-Forsyth; and Jonah Kaplan, senior political reporter for ABC11 news. **Airs:** 8:30 p.m. Friday on UNC-TV, and on the NC Channel at 9 p.m. Friday, 4 p.m. Saturday and 9:30 a.m. Sunday, or online.
- **In Focus:** This week's show recaps the Oct. 10 Hometown Debate series stop in Rocky Mount, where panelists discuss whether North Carolina should increase the state's role in financing local school construction. **Host:** Loretta Boniti **Guests:** Matt Ellinwood of the N.C. Justice Center; Terry Stoops of the John Locke Foundation; Sen. Erica Smith-Ingram, D-Northampton; and Sen. Rick Horner, R-Wilson **Airs:** 11:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. Sunday on Spectrum News/News 14, and can be found online.
- **NC Spin:** Panelists this week discuss municipal elections, bump stocks and gun control, and unfinished legislative business. **Host:** Tom Campbell **Guests:** Henry Hinton, Eastern NC "Talk of the Town" host; political analyst Peg O'Connell; Chris Fitzsimon of N.C. Policy Watch; and author John Hood **Airs:** Sundays at 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. on Fox50 WRAZ. Shows can also be found online at NC Spin.
- **On the Record:** This week's show explores North Carolina's bid to be home to Amazon's second headquarters. **Host:** Laura Leslie **Guests:** Sougata Mukherjee with the Triangle Business Journal; N.C. State economist Mike Walden; and WRAL public records reporter Tyler Dukes. **Airs:** Saturday, 7 p.m. on WRAL-TV, with recordings available online at wral.com.

(THE INSIDER, 10/13/14).

Raleigh Concessions

Bonner Gaylord, who has served on the Raleigh City Council for eight years, will not request a runoff election against his challenger. Gaylord released a statement Thursday evening saying he has worked "to build bridges towards a common purpose" and wants to avoid a divisive fight with top vote-getter Stef Mendell, a political newcomer. Mendell, who was backed by the Wake County Democratic Party, got 516 more votes than Gaylord, an unaffiliated candidate in District E. Because Mendell didn't win more than 50 percent of the vote in Tuesday's election -- she won 49.67 percent -- Gaylord had the option to call for a runoff election. Another City Council candidate, political newcomer Stacy Miller, said Thursday he would not call for a runoff against Nicole Stewart, another newcomer, in the race for an at-large seat. That means Stewart will take that seat, which was vacated by longtime council member Mary-Ann Baldwin. It is still unclear if Charles Francis, a candidate for mayor, will call for a runoff against incumbent Nancy McFarlane, who is seeking her fourth term. (Henry Gargan and Paul A. Specht, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Meeting Prayers

Rowan County on Thursday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review an appeals court ruling that prohibits county commissioners from opening their meetings with prayer. The 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in a 10-5 decision in July that commissioners couldn't continue their longtime prayer ritual. The practice had been challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of three county residents in 2013. Since then, the case has been followed by religious groups and elected officials across the nation. Invoking the First Amendment, which prohibits governments from establishing a religion, the appeals court ruled that Rowan had "elevated one religion above all others and aligned itself with that faith."

Nearly all the prayers offered by commissioners between 2007 and 2013 were Christian, the court's majority found. Members of the public with business before the board often felt pressured to join in, it said. Meetings now open with prayers led by a visiting minister, who faces the commissioners and does not solicit the audience to join in. But commissioners voted in September to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

Religious-liberty law firms that filed the motion for review of the appeals court decision contend that other appeals court rulings have disagreed on the issue, leaving a definitive decision up to the Supreme Court. Rowan County is represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, the National Center for Life and Liberty and First Liberty Institute. (Bruce Henderson, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Lead Hazards

Tainted paint or water remain the most likely sources of lead contaminating a child's blood in North Carolina. But evidence is growing that some imported spices, ceremonial powders, herbal remedies and other products pose an increasing hazard. Children of immigrants may especially be at risk.

Gel Spice, Inc. recalled several brands of ground tumeric powder in 2016 after lead was detected in the spice. At the time of the recall, no illness had been linked to consumption of the spice, according to the FDA. So state and county health officials are ramping up efforts with other child advocates to better assess the scale of this problem and how to help families better protect their kids.

"We are most concerned about spices," said Kim Gaetz, a public health epidemiologist at the children's environmental health branch in the N.C. Division of Public Health. "People don't think of them as something you should be cautious of."

In one case that Gaetz described only generally, laboratory testing detected high levels of lead in a spice found in a child's home. A relative obtained the spice in India where she lives, ground it up and sent it to loved ones in North Carolina. Unknown to the relative, the way she processed the spice added lead to it. "It was in the hammer she was using," Gaetz said.

In another example, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration this summer warned parents nationwide not to use an Ayurvedic medicine available online called Balguti Kesaria after testing here and in Michigan detected lead in it.

The true scale of this problem in North Carolina is unknown. In a records review of elevated blood lead investigations here since 2011, Gaetz so far has found only 35 cases where spices,

ceremonial powders or supplements have been identified as the sole source (or one combined with tainted paint or water) of lead exposure during a home inspection. Some were purchased in the United States. Some were not. (Catherine Clabby, NC HEALTH NEWS, 10/12/17).

Cardinal Board

In response to an investigation by the state Department of Health and Human Services into Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions' spending habits, Cardinal board member and Davidson County Commissioner Fred McClure said Wednesday that the board has acted appropriately to keep its employees in place. On Tuesday, a General Assembly committee discussed the state agency's report and raised concerns about the lavish severance packages for CEO Richard Topping, six executives and four key employees.

Cardinal Innovations, which is funded by taxpayer dollars, is the largest of seven regional mental health agencies across the state. It serves more than 850,000 people and is responsible for the managing and monitoring of mental health services in 20 counties, including Davidson County. The Health and Human Services report stated that the severance payments must cover between two and three years and that the plan includes a broad range of reasons for an employee to become eligible other than termination without just cause. The report stated the severance packages may jeopardize ongoing operations, interrupt services to beneficiaries and increase financial impact if the CEO is terminated or resigns and key employees with severance arrangements leave.

McClure, who has been on the Cardinal board of directors for several years, said the board set up the severance packages to prevent a massive shakeup in management.

"We have not had a massive shakeup in Cardinal since I've been on the board," McClure said. "We have not had that because we pay well and we have good packages. And when the people come on, they know they're going to be taken care of, and they know they're not going to be hung out to dry."

McClure said he disagreed with calls for the board members' removals. He added that the board is made up of a variety of people, including commissioners, engineers and financial workers, among other backgrounds.

"I think the board members have done a good job," McClure said. "The problem with Sen. Tucker and Rep. (Nelson) Dollar is that they have been after Cardinal about a year because of different things. ... We have paid a market-based system for 15 years, and we have turned that payroll into the state every year and it hasn't become an issue until just lately." (Ben Coley, THE LEXINGTON DISPATCH, 10/11/17).

Duke Rates

An undercurrent of mistrust of Duke Energy and state government marked Wednesday night's Snow Hill public hearing on the company's request for a 17 percent rate increase. It was marked as well by indignation that Duke customers are being asked to pay for what speakers called the company's mishandling of coal ash created by coal-burning plants to produce electricity. And they decried that the increase comes at a time when many are still struggling to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Matthew. They questioned as well why the company that has reported large profits over the past several years needs even more money.

For existing residential customers, the proposed rates -- excluding the effects of all riders -- would change the bill of a residential customer using 1,000-kilowatt hours a month. Currently that customer would pay \$104.68. Under the proposal the bill would increase by \$17.80 to \$122.48 (or 17 percent). The company wanted the proposed rates to become effective on July 1, 2017.

However, the N.C. Utilities Commission has issued an order suspending the proposed rate changes for a period of up to 270 days from July 1, 2017.

Nearly a third of the approximately 90 people at the hearing held in the Greene County Courthouse signed up to speak -- several of them from the Goldsboro area. Speaker after speaker testified before the N.C. Utilities Commission that while Duke officials might say the increase is less than \$20 a month, the increase would force some to have to decide between paying the bill and buying food or even medicine.

Duke wants to increase its rates and charges to produce additional overall annual North Carolina retail revenues of approximately \$477.5 million -- an increase of approximately 14.9 percent over current revenues.(Steve Herring, GOLDSBORO NEWS-ARGUS, 10/12/17).

UNC Investigation

After a week-long delay, the NCAA's final report at the end of a 3 1/2-year investigation at UNC-Chapel Hill will be released on Friday, according to sources with knowledge of the case, but who were not authorized to speak publicly about it. The Friday release, which was also reported by ESPN, Inside Carolina and the Associated Press, comes one week later than when the NCAA planned to release the report. The university received notice last Thursday, according to another source, that the report would be released last Friday. It was postponed amid UNC's launch of a long-planned \$4.3 billion fundraising campaign. A university spokesman later said it had been postponed due to "scheduling circumstances."

Institutions under major NCAA investigation are notified 24 hours before the NCAA Committee on Infractions intends to release its final investigative report. Though schools receive a day's notice that the report is coming, they generally don't receive a copy of report until the morning of its release.(Andrew Carter and Aaron Moody, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Silent Sam

Gov. Roy Cooper gave a shout out to student protesters Thursday during UNC-Chapel Hill's 224th birthday celebration. In his keynote address on University Day in Chapel Hill, Cooper offered a list of his dreams, he said, "as an optimistic alumnus."

"I dream of students who are engaged in the world around them and who burn to make it better," he said. "Who help solve problems. Who protest and who vote."

Earlier, about 30 protesters in the audience had made their presence known by holding up signs that spelled out "Silence Sam," a reference to the Confederate monument that many students want to see moved from a prominent location on campus. In a brief interview after his speech, Cooper spoke about the Silent Sam controversy. He has petitioned the state historical commission to relocate other Confederate statues from state grounds to Bentonville Battlefield in Johnston County. "I know that there are a lot of people of goodwill here at the university who want to do the same thing," Cooper said. "I want to help in any way I can."

He didn't elaborate on where that effort stands, but said, "students should be engaged and involved, and should let their feelings be known about this."(Jane Stancill, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Statue Removal

Members of the Sampson County branch of the NAACP have requested the removal of a monument honoring Confederate soldiers and stands on property at the county courthouse. The statue, which stands just outside the entrance of the Sampson County Courthouse, is a monument dedicated to the "Confederate Soldiers." It is one of more than 100 such monuments across the state. Members of the local city and county governments have received a letter from the Unit No. 5446 NAACP branch requesting immediate action be taken to remove the statue.

"It is this commitment and dedication to this city, county and state that we are requesting that you take immediate action to remove the Confederate statue of a soldier that is located on the courthouse yard," the letter states. "This Confederate statue is a visual symbol of America's dark legacy of slavery that deprived human beings of their God-given and constitutionally-protected human rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"We are well aware of the state law that prohibits cities and counties from removing Confederate statues or memorials," the letter reads. "We are asking that you seek action from the state to join several states i.e. California, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, and Texas which have already removed the Confederate statues and memorials."

According to Clinton Mayor Lew Starling, the property the monument sits on is not owned by the city, but by the county. When contacted, assistant county manager Susan Holder confirmed the ownership of the land, as well as the receipt of the letter.(Kristy D. Carter, SAMPSON INDEPENDENT, 10/12/17).

Charged

A Swansboro businessman who is mayor of that town was arrested Thursday on tax charges filed by the N.C. Department of Revenue. John Scott Chadwick was charged on Oct. 12, 2017, with five counts of willful failure to file return, supply information or pay tax. Arrest warrants allege that Mr. Chadwick was required to file North Carolina Individual Income Tax Returns for tax years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, but willfully failed to file the returns with the N.C. Department of Revenue. Mr. Chadwick is employed with Cedar Point Landscaping in Swansboro. Mr. Chadwick appeared before a Wake County magistrate and was placed under a \$2,500 secured bond. A first appearance was scheduled for Oct. 25, 2017, in Wake County District Court in Raleigh. The charges against Mr. Chadwick resulted from an investigation by a special agent with the Department's Criminal Investigations Section in Raleigh. (CARTERET COUNTY NEWS-TIMES, 10/12/17).

Burr Comments

Both President Donald Trump and Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker need to "cool it" in their ongoing verbal feud, U.S. Sen. Richard Burr said in Elizabeth City on Wednesday. Corker, chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, has drawn national attention for warning that the president, a fellow Republican, lacks the "stability" and "competence" to effectively serve as president. Doubling down on those criticisms, Corker has also said in published reports that he believes Trump is making reckless threats toward other countries that could risk "World War III" and that top-level administration officials struggle daily to control the president's impulsive, unfocused behavior. Trump, meanwhile, has contended that Corker, who is up for re-election next year, "begged" him for an endorsement, but Trump wouldn't provide it. Corker has decided not to run again.

In an interview Wednesday, Burr said he doesn't share Corker's views, but also called on both men to tone their rhetoric down. "I'm not sure I necessarily agree with Bob Corker's statement," Burr said, referring specifically to claims that Trump needs to be controlled. "One, I think he and the president need to cool it."

Burr also said he expected that Trump, with a background in business rather than politics, would do things differently than past presidents -- "and he's certainly lived up to that."

Burr also declined to criticize Trump's approach to North Korea, an approach that includes personally insulting dictator Kim Jong Un and threatening U.S. military action to halt North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Burr said that after watching North Korea's missile and nuclear technology continue to develop, "engaging them in dialogue isn't going to help."

Burr also briefly discussed the Senate's ongoing investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. Burr is overseeing it as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The inquiry has drawn intense scrutiny because it's exploring interactions between Trump associates and the Russian government. As Burr said earlier this month, he said the question of "collusion" -- or illicit collaboration between the Trump campaign and Russia -- remains open. Asked to define what he'd consider collusion to be, Burr described it as "coordinated effort to try to influence the outcome of the election." (Jon Hawley, THE (Elizabeth City) DAILY ADVANCE, 10/12/17).

Recovery Program

A year later, many homeowners are still seeking means of assistance in repairing damage that came from Hurricane Matthew's high winds, heavy rains and flood waters. Now one Eastern Carolina community is asking its residents to apply for a new program that may help in some of those repairs. The application is being sent to Kinston residents in their utility bills. The city says they're encouraging homeowners to take a closer look and apply, in a last-ditch effort to help everyone recover from Hurricane Matthew.

The city of Kinston says with a new application, those who are uninsured now have another means to try to get help. "This program is for all the city and zoning jurisdiction, so even properties that were damaged outside of the floodplain are eligible," explains Adam Short, Kinston's city planner. Lenoir County Emergency Management says that the majority of homes that applied for a buyout have received word back. That leaves homes that didn't qualify for a buyout to possibly qualify for the loan pool. The city says the program will cover up to \$40,000 in damages or up to 50 percent

of the estimated replacement value for the damaged structure, whichever is less.(C.B. Cotton and Lindsay Oliver, WITN TV, 10/12/17).

RDU Land

The Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority has received two offers to lease 105 acres of airport land near Umstead State Park: one from a conservation group that wants to preserve the land, and another from a stone company that wants to dig it up. Wake Stone Corp. already operates a quarry next to the airport's property, just south of William B. Umstead State Park, and proposes opening a new stone quarry on airport land that would operate for 25 to 30 years. The company says after the quarry shuts down, the property could be used for recreation, including hiking and fishing.

Meanwhile, The Conservation Fund, a national environmental organization, says the offer it made this summer to buy the 105 acres for \$6.46 million still stands. But this week it also proposed to lease the property or to lease/purchase it over five years for \$6.8 million. "We thought it was important that the RDU board have conservation alternatives to consider for the property as they evaluate leasing it to Wake Stone or others for a quarry," Bill Holman, The Conservation Fund's state director, wrote in an email.

Airport authority chairman Farad Ali turned down The Conservation Fund's offer to buy the property in a letter on Sept. 8, the same day the airport put it and two other tracts near Umstead totaling 151 acres up for lease. Wake County has proposed leasing the other two tracts for use by hikers and mountain bikers in an effort to expand on nearby Lake Crabtree Park that the county maintains on land it leases from the airport.

The airport authority met Thursday to give the county, The Conservation Fund and Wake Stone a chance to make their cases for leasing airport property in public. Afterward, Raleigh-Durham International Airport president and CEO Michael Landguth said his staff will review the proposals and make recommendations to the authority, but said he could not say how long that would take.(Richard Stradling, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Water Tests

Residents who live in the area where a potentially harmful chemical has been detected in drinking water have gotten mail that appears to be aimed at enticing them to buy a water filter system. Some residents who live near the Chemours plant off N.C. 87 have gotten an envelope that says, "Community Water Test." The mail includes a survey that has a warning about GenX, which is used to make nonstick coatings on cookware and for other purposes. The mail asks residents to fill out the survey and send it in a postage-paid envelope to the "Water Analysis Department" at a post office box in Raleigh. It promises a water test at "no cost."

Some Fayetteville residents have received similar mail, according to Carolyn Justice-Hinson, a spokeswoman for the city's Public Works Commission. Some residents have responded to the mail and gotten tests, which claimed to show that the water contained GenX, arsenic and other compounds, she said. "Their information ... appeared misleading, and we wanted to remind customers about our drinking water standards and caution them before making costly commitments to products that haven't been shown to remove those contaminants," she said. Jamie Kritzer, a spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Quality, said the department does not endorse products. State officials strongly urge people to be cautious when considering the purchase of any home water filtering system, he said. "People should be aware that when opportunity presents itself there can be predatory marketing," Kritzer said. "People who have concerns should contact the Consumer Protection Division of the North Carolina Attorney General's Office."(Steve DeVane, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, 10/12/17).

Western Carolina Pledge

The first family of Western Carolina University said they will give \$1.23 million to the school to support its upcoming capital campaign. Chancellor David Belcher and wife Susan Brummell Belcher announced the pledge Thursday at a donor luncheon. Their gift -- a combination of cash, previous commitments and a portion of their estate -- will be used for student scholarships. Belcher has said increasing the number of scholarships is one of his top priorities. Since he became chancellor in 2011, Western Carolina has established more than 200 endowed

scholarships. "This is worthy work, and our students deserve no less," Belcher said in a statement. The Belchers previously established scholarships for students in the College of Fine and Performing Arts and the Honors College at Western Carolina. Their gift will be part of the Western Carolina's ongoing capital campaign. The university won't announce fundraising goals until early next year.(John Newsom, GREENSBORO NEWS & RECORD, 10/12/17).

Grisham Cottages

The jury is still out on the fate of four century-old cottages located in North Carolina on property owned by bestselling author John Grisham. The Herald-Sun of Durham reports Grisham got permission this week from a town commission to demolish the homes in Chapel Hill. The Historic District Commission also voted to delay demolition by 365 days, the maximum time that state law allows. Grisham, the commission and Preservation Chapel Hill are searching for someone who will move the cottages. The cottages are on lots behind a home that Grisham and his wife Renee bought last year. The Grishams want to replace the cottages with landscaping. Grisham said in an email that his team is sorting through about 20 inquiries so far from people and groups interested in the cottages.(THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/12/17).

Prison Break

State prison officials are reporting that two prison employees were killed and several more have been injured following an attempted escape Thursday afternoon at Pasquotank Correctional Institute north of Elizabeth City. Jerry Higgins, communications officer for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, said he didn't know details about the employees' injuries, but that the situation is contained. "Nobody escaped," Higgins said.

A press release from Sentara Healthcare states its hospital in Elizabeth City, Sentara Albemarle Medical Center, has received six patients from the attempted prison escape. The release does not contain any information about the patients' conditions. It also wasn't clear whether any of the six were inmates. Families of patients are being advised to stay away from the hospital. There are, however, family members of prison employees at the hospital waiting to hear word whether their family members are among the injured.

According to the N.C. DPS' Twitter account, fires were set in the prison sewing plant about 3:30 p.m., apparently for the escape attempt. The sewing plant is a prison enterprise at Pasquotank Correctional Institute. An updated tweet from DPS said the fires at the prison have been extinguished and the prison is currently under lockdown. "Situation under control," the DPS tweet states.

Three Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools were locked down because of the attempted prison break.(THE (Elizabeth City) DAILY ADVANCE, 10/12/17).

Legislative Studies and Meetings

Items in **RED** are new listings.

LB: Legislative Building

LOB: Legislative Office Building.

More Information: <http://ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

Tuesday Oct. 17

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.

Wednesday, Oct. 25

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.

Friday, Oct. 27

- 11 a.m. | The North Carolina Courts Commission, 643 LOB.

Wednesday, Nov. 1

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.
- **10 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform (2017), 544 LOB**

Thursday Nov. 2

- 10 a.m. | The Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (2017), UNC School of Government / Room 2402 and 2321.

Monday, Nov. 6

- 11 a.m. | House Select Committee on Strategic Transportation Planning and Long Term Funding Solutions, 2202 Burnett Blvd., Wilmington.

Tuesday, Nov. 7

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- **9 a.m. | Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy Notice, 643 LOB.**
- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.
- **1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Capital Improvements, 544 LOB.**

Thursday, Nov. 9

- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee, 643 LOB.

Wednesday, Jan. 17

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.

Wednesday, Jan. 24

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.

N.C. Government Meetings and Hearings

Items in **RED** are new listings.

Friday, Oct. 13

- 8:30 a.m. | The State Board of Dental Examiners meets, 2000 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 160, Morrisville.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Property Tax Commission meets, 501 North Wilmington St., North Carolina Department of Revenue / Room 135, Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Home Inspector Licensure Board meets, 116 West Jones St., Raleigh.
- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Basic Law Enforcement Training Revision Committee hold public meeting, 1001 Burkemont Ave., Morganton.

- 12:30 p.m. | The NCWorks Commission Education and Training Committee meets, 3121 W. Gate City Road, Sheraton Four Seasons, Greensboro.

Tuesday, Oct. 17

- 1:30 p.m. | The Accountability Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Thursday, Oct. 19

- 9 a.m. | The Board of Directors of the North Carolina State Ports Authority meets, Board Room of the North Carolina Maritime Building, 2202 Burnett Blvd., Wilmington.
- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Friday, Oct. 20

- 8:30 a.m. | The State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating & Fire Sprinkler Contractors meets, TBD.
- 9 a.m. | The State Board of Community Colleges meets, 200 West Jones St., Caswell Building Raleigh.

Monday, Oct. 23

- 8 a.m. | Western Carolina University Board of Trustees meets, 501 HFR Building, Cullowhee.
- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Military Affairs Commission 4th Quarter NCMAC Base Sustainability/Community Affairs meets, 413 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Tuesday, Oct. 24

- 8 a.m. | The state Board of Barber Examiners meets, 5809 Departure Dr., Ste 102, Raleigh.
- 10 a.m. | The NC Military Affairs Commission 4th Quarter NCMAC Economic Development meeting, 413 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 10 a.m. | Wildlife Resources Commission: Public Hearing-Technical Changes to 27 Water Safety Rules, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.
- 11 a.m. | The state Economic Investment Committee Board meets, 301 N. Wilmington St., Commerce Executive Board Room, 4th floor, Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | The State Bar 2017 October Annual Meeting, 217 E. Edenton St., NC State Bar Building, Raleigh.
- 1 p.m. | The N.C. Code Officials Qualification Board meets, 116 West Jones St., Raleigh.

Wednesday, Nov. 1

- 10:30 a.m. | The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries meets, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Wilmington Regional Office, 127 N. Cardinal Drive Extension, Wilmington.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 9

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Monday, Nov. 13

- 11 a.m. | The Executive Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Tuesday, Nov. 14

- 12:30 p.m. | The NC Pesticide Board meets, Gov. James Martin Building - N.C. State Fairgrounds, Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 16

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 7

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 14

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Jan. 11

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

N.C. Utilities Commission Hearing Schedule

Dobbs Building

430 North Salisbury Street

Raleigh, North Carolina

More Information: <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/activities/activit.htm>

Monday, Oct. 16

- Staff Conference

Friday, Oct. 20

- 10 a.m. | T-4624 Sub 2 .. Show Cause, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Monday, Oct. 23

- Staff Conference

Tuesday, Oct. 24

- 6:30 p.m. | E-34 Sub 46 ...Application of Appalachian State University d/b/a New River Light and Power Company for an Adjustment of Rates and Charges for Electric Service in North Carolina, Watauga County Courthouse, 842 W. King St., Boone.

Wednesday, Oct. 25

- 6 p.m. | W-390 Sub 13 ...Petition to Appoint Emergency Operator and Increase Rates, Macon County Courthouse, 5 W. Main St., Franklin.

Thursday, Oct. 26

- 10 a.m. | Complaint - Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC, Old Civil Courts Building, Mecklenburg County, 800 E. 4th St., Charlotte.

Monday, Oct. 30

- Staff Conference
- 6:30 p.m. | E-2 Sub 1150 ...Application for CPCN to Construct Cleveland-Matthews Transmission Line, Johnston County, Johnston County Courthouse, 207 E. Johnston St., Smithfield.

Tuesday, Oct. 31

- 10 a.m. | E-2 Sub 1150 ...Application for CPCN to Construct Cleveland-Matthews Transmission Line, Johnston County, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Wednesday, Nov. 1

- 10 a.m. | G-41 Sub 50 ...Toccoa Natural Gas' Annual Prudence Review for the Period Beginning July 1, 2016 and Ending June 30, 2017, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Monday, Nov. 6

- Staff Conference
- 1:30 | E-22 Sub 544, 545, 546 ... Application by Virginia Electric and Power Company d/b/a Dominion Energy North Carolina for Approval of Renewable Energy, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Monday, Nov. 13

- Staff Conference

Monday, Nov. 20

- Staff Conference

Monday, Nov. 27

- Staff Conference

Monday, Dec. 4

- Staff Conference

UNC Board of Governors

Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development
140 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill (**remote meeting locations in RED**)
More Information: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/bog/schedule.php>

Friday, Nov. 3

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Dec. 15

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Jan. 26, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, March 23, 2018

- TBA | UNC Wilmington, Wilmington.

Friday, May 25, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality

The N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources has a new name - the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. More Information: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/home>

Wednesday, Oct. 11

- 9 a.m. | The State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (SCFAC) meets, 801 Biggs Dr., Hearing Rm. 104, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Nov. 1

- 9 a.m. | The State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (SCFAC) meets, Dix Grill, 1101 Cafeteria Dr., Raleigh.

Wednesday, Dec. 13

- 9 a.m. | The State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (SCFAC) meets, Dix Grill, 1101 Cafeteria Dr., Raleigh.

Other Meetings and Events of Interest

Items in **RED** are new listings.

Monday, Nov. 6

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Women in Banking Conference, Renaissance Charlotte Southpark, 5501 Carnegie Blvd., Charlotte.

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